



TOWN CLERK

Kandy L. Lavallee
Town Clerk

TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
(508) 839-5335 ext. 1195
www.grafton-ma.gov
email: clerks@grafton-ma.gov

POLICY STATEMENT
TOWN OF GRAFTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

NUMBER 4-88

October 4, 1988

TITLE: Political Signs

PURPOSE: To allow for a uniform understanding of applicable by-laws and allowed practices involving political signs.

POLICY:

1. Signs placed on private property are controlled by the provisions of Section 4.4.1.2.4 of the Zoning By-law.
2. No sign may be attached to any public shade tree or telephone pole or public building.
3. No sign may be placed on public property.
4. On Election day signs on public property must be held or carried or not left unattended at any time and remain outside any boundary established by the Town Clerk in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws. No sign may exceed twelve (12) square feet in area.
5. Any sign found to be in violation of this policy that is on public property shall be removed forthwith by town personnel under the direction of the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Grafton Sign By-Law

7. All signs erected under this By-Law shall be erected in the exact location and manner described in the permit. The permit number shall be clearly visible on the sign.
8. The application for a permit for an automated variable message sign shall include contact information for one or more contacts who shall be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and who shall be responsible for message content and sign maintenance. This requirement is for the direct contact of a responsible party for compliance to this Bylaw and the issuance of an emergency Public Service Announcement (PSA). The issuance of an emergency PSA shall be voluntary on the part of the sign owner. If said contact information changes subsequent to the permit application, updated contact information shall be provided to the Inspector of Buildings and the Chief of Police.

4.4.1.2 Exceptions

1. No permit shall be required for a sign in a residential district erected in accordance with the provision of Section 4.4.3.3 of this By-Law.
2. No permit shall be required for any sign erected by the Town or by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or any subdivision or agency thereof.
3. No permit shall be required for holiday decorations when displayed within forty-five (45) days prior to and ten (10) days after the holiday with which they are specifically identified and which do not advertise or promote the interests of any person, premise or activity.
4. No permit shall be required for signs endorsing candidates or issues for public elections, which are displayed as temporary or portable signs, provided such signs are not greater than twelve (12) square feet in area. Such signs shall be allowed in all zoning districts and shall comply with all other requirements for temporary signs as set forth in Section 4.4.2.3 of this By-law.
5. The provisions of Section 4.4 shall not apply to signs either held or supported by an individual or group of persons.
6. The standard type of gasoline and diesel fuel pump bearing thereon in usual size and form the name or type of fuel and the price thereof, shall not be deemed to be a sign under this By-Law.

4.4.1.3 Enforcement

1. At the request of the Applicant the Inspector of Buildings shall inspect every sign for which a permit is required within thirty (30) days after it is erected to determine whether the sign has been erected in accordance with the provisions of the permit therefore and shall order the removal or modification of any sign erected or maintained in a manner inconsistent with such permit. Thirty (30) days notice in writing shall be given to the owner of such sign, and to the owner of the premises on which such sign is located to remove the sign or to modify it to be in accordance with the provisions of the permit. Immediate removal may be ordered for any sign requiring a permit which is erected without first obtaining such permit.

-
2. Any sign owner or owner of property on which a sign is located who violates, or permits a violation of, this By-Law shall be subject to a fine in accordance with Section 1.3.6.3 of the Zoning By-Laws.

4.4.2 General Regulations

The following provisions are applicable to signs in all districts.

4.4.2.1 Illumination

1. Electric signs are not permitted within any residential district or the Village Mixed Use District.
2. Changeable Electronic Variable signs are permitted only in the Community Business zoned districts (this shall not apply to existing non-conforming signs of these types).
3. No red or green lights shall be used on any sign if the sign is located so that such lights could create a driving hazard.
4. No sign may be illuminated more than thirty (30) minutes before opening or after closing of any store or business, or thirty (30) minutes before or after working hours in an industrial building, except signs identifying municipal buildings.
5. Internally illuminated signs, luminous signs, and signs illuminated from an external source directed solely toward said sign are the only permitted methods of illumination. The light from any sign shall be so shaded, shielded or directed or shall be maintained at a sufficiently low level of intensity and brightness that it shall not adversely affect the neighboring premises nor the safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public ways. Only white lights shall be used for external illumination of a sign.
6. An electric sign on which the message is visible only when the sign is illuminated (including, but not limited to, a changeable electronic variable message sign) shall be equipped with a light detector/photocell, a scheduled dimming timer, or other automatic control by which the sign's brightness can be dimmed when ambient light conditions darken. In addition to any other enforcement authority specified in this bylaw, the Inspector of Buildings shall have the authority to enforce reasonable standards upon any owner of such a sign regarding the brightness of the sign.
7. A message displayed on a changeable electronic variable message sign shall be composed of one foreground color and one contrasting background color.
8. Signs within the Village Mixed Use District may be illuminated only from external sources, and only white lights shall be used for illumination.

4.4.2.2 Billboards

Billboards are prohibited in all parts of the Town of Grafton, except where specifically permitted.

4.4.2.3 Temporary and Portable Signs

Except as specifically permitted by this By-Law or where otherwise exempted by the provisions of the United States Constitution and Article 16 of the Massachusetts Constitution, all temporary signs and portable signs are prohibited in the Town of Grafton. Temporary signs and portable signs permitted under this By-Law shall be displayed no earlier than thirty (30) days prior to, and no later than seven (7) days after any event for which such sign is intended to address. Such signs shall not be erected or displayed so as to endanger public safety.

4.4.2.4 Moving Signs

1. Except as provided in this subsection, signs or portions thereof operated so as to swing, flash, or revolve, signs consisting of pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, strings of light bulbs, revolving beacons, searchlights, signs displaying animation, and signs operated or illuminated so as to create the illusion of motion are prohibited in all districts.
2. Any message, advertisement, announcement or display on an automated variable message sign shall remain fixed for a period of at least ten (10) seconds.
3. An automated variable message sign shall change from one message, advertisement, announcement or display to the next within three-tenths (0.3) of one second.
4. A changeable electronic variable message sign shall display no message if it malfunctions in a way that renders it incapable of complying with the provisions of this by-law.

4.4.2.5 Installation

1. No sign shall be erected that shall in any way create a traffic hazard, nor shall it in any way obscure, obstruct, or confuse traffic control or the view of motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians as required for traffic safety.
2. No sign, or sign structure, may project beyond the curb line.
3. Letters, figures, characters or representations in cutout or irregular form, maintained in conjunction with, attached to, or superimposed upon any sign, shall be safely and securely built or attached to the sign structure.
4. No sign shall be painted on the exterior surface of any wall, including windows and doors.
5. Signs shall be designed, constructed and erected in accordance with the State Building Code.
6. No sign shall be posted or attached to utility poles, trees, fences, other signs, or structures other than buildings or a structure designed to support a free-standing sign.